

Connect Somerset – Connecting People

Impact in 2024



Connect Somerset is proud to partner with Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations to help bolster Early Help capacity, reflecting our core mission in Connecting People.



CCS
people • place • enterprise

YMCA



**Somerset
Community
Foundation**

**MINEHEAD
EYE**
YOUTH SERVICES

mind
in Somerset

**YEovil
ART SPACE**



FrOme
TOWN COUNCIL



**THE
SPACE**



HOLYROOD
— ACADEMY —

the **Balsam**
Centre





2024 was a year to celebrate.....

£956,750

funded to **95**
community hubs
to bolster capacity
during the winter

1,400 users
across the early
help partnership
accessing
Transform Family
View

530

ICS professionals
attended Connect
Somerset
neighbourhood
meetings

32,949

places were used
by young people
attending the
SASP 'Holiday
Activity & Food'
programme

The CCS
Somerset Carers
Service
has supported
628
unpaid carers

163,072

households
supported
through the
Household
Support Fund

Our sensory loss
providers, DeafPLUS
& Somerset
Sight supported

3,990 people in
the
community

21 early help
partnership
organisations are
sharing their data
into the
Transform data
lake

Champions are in
active engagement
and dialogue with
92% of schools
in Somerset



2024 was a year to celebrate.....

146,000
visitors to the
Local Offer
website sourcing
information and
advice to self serve

£7,858,912
of funding
distributed to VCFSE
partners across
Somerset

758
registered users
on #Learn4love,
the universal
parenting offer

35,600
professionals have
accessed the Connect
Somerset website
124,000 times

100
School pastoral staff
attended training
focusing on Trauma
Informed
approaches and
good practice

CCS Village Agents
have supported
2,294
people to resolve or
improve social, emotional,
situational and practical
issues affecting their
health, wellbeing and
independence

Red Cross and CCS Village
Agents have supported
5,013
people by providing the best
solution to support discharge
safely home from hospital

£616,000
to support
community
grassroots
organisations to
increase capacity
to care

4,967
individual children
searched on
Transform Family
View since the 'go
live' date of June 24

A month in the life of our Yeovil Champion, Natasha...

I have participated in the Special Educational Needs (SEN) meetings as a Champion, where we have positively addressed the critical need for early support before preschool. I had a productive meeting with the Yeovil Health Visiting team and the FOREST pilot team to discuss enhancing collaboration on SEN provisions and improving early conversations with parents.

During discussions on transitions from preschool to primary and from primary to secondary school, I have identified valuable opportunities to strengthening cooperation between the health and education sectors. By leveraging community hubs, we are creating meaningful relationships with local families.

I have connected with Able2Achieve, an adult learning charity to initiate a promising project focusing on alternative provisions, including community gardening activities. This initiative is a great step toward enhancing local engagement.

Additionally, I'm working on the Fairmead Sensory Garden, which aims to foster relationships with community groups and local businesses while also encouraging parental involvement in creating an enriching outdoor learning space.

I am also working with Ilchester School and Tall Trees Community Centre on building relationships with Yeovilton families.



Somerset Carers Service

Working in partnership with



"Maggie" called the advice line looking for support for her parents. Her mum (the carer) had been admitted into hospital and was ready to be discharged. However, there were concerns surrounding her dad (the cared for) who has dementia and if the environment was safe enough for the carer to be discharged into. The family were unsure where to go to for support. They had tried to get help from their GP surgery and the discharge team at the hospital but felt they were getting passed around without getting anywhere. After a lot of stress and calling various agencies, they had been advised to call the Carers Service.

"Maggie's" goals

- Maggie felt divided and wanted to support both parents. They understood the carer did not feel safe to return home without some support but also wanted to champion the rights of the cared for and did not want them to be labelled by the behaviour the progression of Dementia had brought about.
- The family wanted to find solutions to help the carer feel more supported at home before allowing them to be discharged from hospital. The client already felt guilty that they could not take on a more practical role in supporting their parents due to locality. Family dynamics also meant that the cared for was not able to go and stay there either.

Outcomes achieved

The family feel much more positive going forward. Support was being put in place for them in terms of assessments, but no practical support was available in the short term. This had caused a lot of anxiety for all involved. The agent was able to listen to the concerns of the family and offer solutions that could be put into effect more quickly. The family as well as the carer feel confident enough to now focus on the practicalities of the carer being discharged from hospital rather than worrying that no support was available to them.

“ You have been the most helpful person I have spoken to. You are focused on finding solutions and passing us on to other agencies. Thank you. You have been amazing. ”

542 carers
signed up to
our online
carer service

628
referrals into
Somerset
Carers Service

570 of these
referrals were
complex and had
Agent
involvement and
follow up



somerset
carers
part of CCS

You've heard it here first.....

The Early Help System Guide evaluation shows improved leadership in 2024!

Somerset is in top 14% for early help
– with Earned Autonomy award
from Central Government

Then....

In 2023 – “There was some good evidence of progress – to some extent/across many elements. There may be some emerging evidence of the outcomes/impact. The next steps are clear.”

**EHSG
Score
: 3/5**

“With a culture of valuing the collaboration through Connect Somerset, links with Mental Health services and ICS, raising the profile in the private sector. With a recognised change in ethos.”

“Early help is seen as everyone's responsibility in Somerset, with partners reporting strategical alignment through the Effective Support Document, Connect Somerset model, and SSCP”

Now....

2024 – “This is largely in place although not yet fully established or embedded. There is some good evidence of outcomes/impact. There is a plan for continuous improvement.”

**EHSG
Score
: 4/5**

“Somerset has robust Information Sharing arrangements, enabling multi agency data sharing to safeguard children, inform decision making and identify areas of need ”

“Through the Team Around the School model there is a whole family approach in their model of working, with access to support maturing”

NEET Targeted Risk Model.....

**Has enhanced our ability to proactively offer support,
preventing issues from escalating**

Overview:

The NEET Targeted Risk Model identifies individuals at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) to enable targeted early intervention.

The existing Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI) tool is outdated, prompting the development of this new model that leverages improved data quality and quantity in Somerset and the technical capabilities of the Business Intelligence colleagues. This work has been underpinned by the learnings from an evaluation of analytical tools by Edinburgh University.

Outcomes achieved:

Appropriate practitioners are provided with a list of individuals likely to become NEET, supporting targeted early intervention.

Young people are supported more efficiently, with better outcomes.

Young people are more likely to contribute to Somerset economic activity.



Antenatal Education has been fostered through the Boden Centre – a hub of diversity!

Our Champion for Chard, Langport, Ilminster and Crewkerne has through the creation of a shared community space been busy building the relational practice within the neighbourhood.

The Boden Centre is a place where everyone is welcome. It's a dedicated space for the community of Chard to meet up, access services or join in with groups. The space is self-funded with a heart to help and serve those who need it.

Through Connect Somerset, this champion secured the building which created a foundation for multi agency teams to come together to learn and connect. With the existing knowledge and trusted relationships our Champion has in this neighbourhood we have enabled a soulless building to have a heart again.

Via external grants funds we have appointed an Early years lead and Hub Centre Manager to coordinate the offer from the Boden Centre for the community.

Through the diverse local partnerships, the multi agency team have fostered increased provision e.g. FOREST through the Public Health team, maternity services from Somerset Foundation Trust and outreach services from Holyrood Academy - all of which have been embedded within the community alongside the Chard Community Hub community offer.



The image shows a 'What's On' calendar for the Chard Community Hub. The calendar is tilted and features a grid of orange boxes for each day of the week. The title 'What's On' is in large green letters at the top. The Chard Community Hub logo is in the top left corner. The calendar lists various activities and their times for each day.

Day	Activity	Time
Monday	Community Fridge	2pm-4pm
Tuesday	Art and Crafts Hub	10.30am-12.30pm
Wednesday	Open for drop ins	9am-12pm
Thursday	Community Pantry	2pm-5.30pm
Friday	Repair Hub	9am-12pm Fortnightly
Saturday	Community Fridge	10am-12pm
Sunday	Community Fridge	4pm-5.30pm

Other activities listed include: Changes Group (4pm-6pm), Healthy Little Ones (1pm-2.30pm), Police Drop In (10am-12pm), Abri Housing Drop In (10am-1pm), Sewing Workshop (6pm-8pm), Crochet Group (6pm-8pm), Sustainable Energy Clinic (10am-1pm), Fun through Food (1pm-2.30pm), WATCH Project (9am-4pm), Music for Connection, and Belly Dancing (6pm-7pm).

Connecting our Caring Community....

Community Rooted Solutions to support Adult Social Care



The £616k fund via the Department for Health and Social Care Accelerated Reform Fund has enabled targeted investment in grassroots organisations to design support for unpaid carers and to build care capacity.....

Support and investment in **16** hyper local associations have:

- Mobilised 16 communities to think how they can make their areas good places to grow old or to live with disabilities.
- Supported the creation of 100's of new associations, supports or services, increasing the menu of supports for people with a direct payment or who self fund their care.
- Developed parish and neighbourhood information sharing networks so that people get in the information and support they need to live the lives they want.





A mutual partnership with Living Better Primary Care Network

Minehead Eye and the Connect Somerset Champion Paul have facilitated collaboration, improved access to services, and supported community health and well-being. Both have been invaluable partners in promoting health and well-being across West Somerset.

From a PCN Health perspective, this collaboration has enhanced our ability to reach vulnerable populations who might otherwise be disengaged from traditional healthcare services. It has allowed us to work more closely with local stakeholders and education to improve patient outcomes, especially for our young population and reduce health inequalities, and empower individuals to take control of their own health.

By fostering collaborative partnerships, they've enabled the delivery of joint initiatives such as our children's and young people health coach. These efforts have directly supported the health goals of the PCN, addressing key areas like prevention, early intervention, and mental health support. This collaboration has been essential in improving service integration, ensuring that individuals within the West Somerset community can access a more holistic approach to care. It has led to stronger relationships between healthcare professionals, community groups, education and patients, fostering a more inclusive and supportive health environment.

Minehead Eye's role in providing a welcoming and accessible environment for our health coaches to consult from has significantly improved access to health-related services for the local population, in a way that de-medicalises and puts the onus onto the patient for taking control of their health and wellbeing. The aim is to not only help individuals but also help reduce pressure on healthcare services by supporting preventative health measures.

Through our partnership, we have seen an increase in local residents engaging with health screenings, preventive care, and mental health services. This aligns with the PCN's objectives of reducing demand for urgent care and improving long-term health outcomes by focusing on prevention and early detection. As local healthcare services become increasingly stretched, initiatives led by neighbourhood partners ensure that there are ongoing, community-based resources available for long-term health improvement. This helps alleviate pressure on primary care services, fostering better long-term health outcomes.

I personally find Paul to be an incredibly positive and engaging individual, always bringing energy and enthusiasm to every collaboration. He is not afraid to speak up when he disagrees, which adds value to our discussions and ensures that all perspectives are considered. I highly value his extensive local experience and expertise in the sector, which has been crucial in driving positive change.

Kerry Westcott, West Somerset Primary Care Network Manager

Prestigious Sector Led Improvement status – achieved in 2024!

Children's Services are proud to announce that they have been awarded by the Department for Education, Sector Led Improvement (SLI) status.

Recognising its outstanding commitment to continuous improvement, collaboration, and service excellence.

Sector Led Improvement is a nationally recognised approach that empowers local authorities to drive their own progress through peer support, shared learning, and best practice initiatives.

Achieving this status reflects Somerset's Childrens Services dedication to enhancing services, strengthen partnerships, much of which is captured under the Early Help transformation programme, Connect Somerset – helping to deliver the best possible outcomes for families and residents.

The principles within the Connect Somerset approach were fundamental to the service achieving this status. Elements of significant acknowledgement was the programmes symbiotic relationship with the VCFSE and the digital and data transformation work through the Transform data lake and its associated products.

The SLI status highlights Connect Somersets' ability to adapt, innovate, and share expertise with other councils, ensuring collective progress across the sector.

This is a significant achievement and a testament to the hard work and dedication of our colleagues/partners and stakeholders. Sector Led Improvement is about working together to raise standards and ensure our communities receive the highest quality services. We are proud to be recognised as a leader in this approach and will continue to strive for excellence.

CCS Village Agents – our community heroes.....

What were the circumstances?

- Prolific hoarder
 - Tenancy breakdown
- Carers strain
- Physical and mental challenges for both adult and young person

What was the approach taken?

The agent initially met the family with Social Care colleagues.

The Agent subsequently made several short visits building the trust of the client and finding out about the extended family and the history behind presenting issues.

What were the client's goals?

- Safer home to navigate as physical health issues were causing poor mobility
- To display personal items that had been inherited
- Kitchen to be safe to be able to prepare nutritious meals
 - To pursue hobbies
- Feel less stressed as a carer

What interventions happened?

- Contacted the housing association and agreed on a solution
- Checked all benefits and finances were in place
- Supporting a micro provider who agreed to take on the cleaning/decluttering
 - Found details of the hobby clubs linked to clients' interests
- Supported Social Care with day service provision for the family member

* Outcomes achieved *

- Home was clean and safe
- Came to a positive conclusion with housing provider
- Client gave the hobby club a try with the support from the Agent
- Home less hoarded and precious items are on display
- Client is now invested in helping to keep home clean
- The Young Person is attending therapeutic farm so can grow emotionally away from the home, and client has respite.
- Family members and home life is more settled



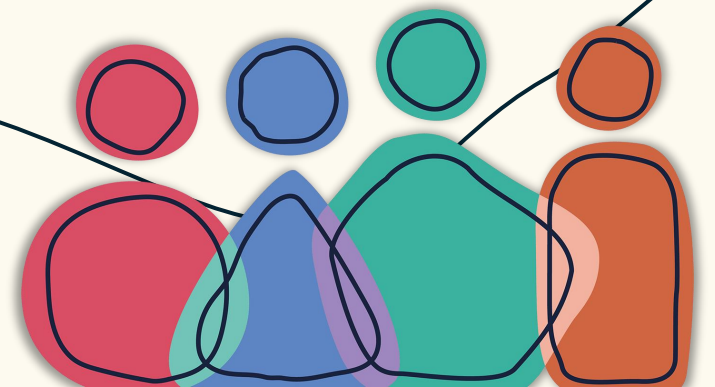
Confidence amongst the ICS workforce – Survey results

What are the biggest strengths in this way of working?

- Reduction in costs and a better service to clients.
- It means that we are open and holistic in our way of working and we can get the right support for the family at the right time. It also means if things come back later on or something else happens, we have a clear idea of what was shared/ what was done so that we can build on this in terms of support for families. Sharing with GP's/ medical professionals I feel is vital as families only get 10 min appointments at times and its not enough to give a full picture. By GP's knowing what support in schools is being offered to parents helps them to work out if they need to be something else as well, it gives them a very good picture.
- Families being more aware of support organisations and having local, easy access support at times of need and building relationships within their community.
- Drawing on a wide skills base and collective will - when it works!
- An enhanced awareness of local offers, the ability to signpost families to support quickly, and able to shape provision that matches local need.
- Creates a compelling business case for prevention focused public services.
- Accelerates outcomes, reduces delay and duplication, and provides better intelligence for deployment and service design.

How has Connect Somerset impacted on you or your organisation?

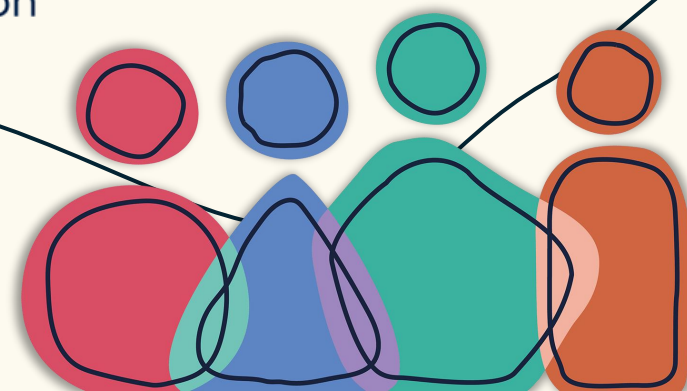
- Greater Somerset links
- Further awareness to the range of support and localised services available to neighbourhoods.
- Pursue locality and neighbourhood working.
- Enhanced working practice and added another layer to how we can support families holistically.
- Attending community breakfast events.
- Accessing local projects.
- Supported us to build better relationships with Somerset Council services.
- We feel we are a part of Connect Somerset.
- Connect Somerset has enhanced my understanding of the local offer for families in my neighbourhood and offered opportunities to create new ways of working for PFSAs.
- Given us a platform and confidence to promote the value of prevention/ early help.



When you think of Connect Somerset, what words do you associate?

equality somerset joined-up across egalitarian
support services contacts
working-together great linking ethos given early intervention
community compassionate
supportive bringing known driven
together potential connecting
working quality local share relationships
collaboration people signposting enthusiastic
effectiveness principles reach knowledgeable information
partnership

Brand association test



Blue Monday? What Blue Monday?

On Monday 20th January, Wellington's neighbourhood meeting took place at Court Fields School. Refreshments (bacon rolls) were provided by the community through our local butcher, Tim Potter. When you try to pull a meeting like this together the concerns are always around who will turn up? Will we get the right people there?

Whilst an agenda was set, we wanted to ensure that this was fluid so that everyone could take advantage of this networking opportunity. We wanted people to feel listened to, we wanted to ensure that where possible the attendees could support each other in dealing with priorities. We also wished to ensure that the voice of Young People was heard... and all of this on Blue Monday. We were not disappointed.

Over 50 people in the Court Fields staff room, ranging from strategic leads from the Local Authority, Town Council, Schools and Primary Care together with community mobilisers from the Churches Together Alliance, Best Before Food Store, Rotary Club, SASP, Village Agent's as well as CYP practitioners represented by EY providers, Community Safety, FIS and Inclusion Services etc to students from Court Fields. All had their part to play in taking neighbourhood working to the next level.

We asked attendees to highlight work they were doing and where they felt they needed support from anyone in the room. The second part of this exercise was for anyone who felt they could help to complete a slip with their contact details. There was a huge response, and this information will be collated to match up those who feel they can support with the requests made.

An update on neighbourhood working was given by the Children Services' Early Help lead for Somerset Council, which very much set the scene for how as a community we wished to move forward. The voice of Young People, through the inspiring group of students that presented on the work they are doing on creating a Young Peoples Independent Advisory Group to the Police. An update on work at the Kings Arms was given by Helen Acreman from Wellington Town Council. And a very recent ex Court Fields student then spoke about an offer by Young Somerset for young people struggling with mental health.

Finally, Polly Matthews, Head Teacher at Court Fields updated on Cradle to Career. A huge amount of data and a mapping of services in Wellington had been undertaken as part of this process. Polly was able to drill down potential areas to be addressed by Post Code and look at how potential issues can be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

There is so much that can be said about this meeting and how through the Champion role we are fostering the right relationships and ways of working that's truly is making a difference to the Children, families and residents of Somerset.

Pete Joint, Connect Somerset Champion for Wellington – Wellington Town Council



Community SPOC's strengths-based approach, supports a reduction in demand on hospital beds....

A collaborative response from the British Red Cross and the Community Council for Somerset has supported acute discharge and pathway step-downs and divergence at Musgrove Park Hospital and Yeovil District Hospital.

The collaboration has supported a flexible approach across the two acute hospitals as well as D2A and bedded pathways, helping to maximise and to develop greater opportunities to ensure that the Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprises (VCFSE) can work to its full potential to support the wellbeing of our communities.



“ I honestly can't thank your team enough. They are cut from a different cloth. Always so helpful and willing to support us and the patients....We have never had to wait for their support. Thank you. ”

5013
referrals into
the
Community
SPOC

Average
number of
days in the
service is **9**

Average cost
per referral is
£94

Average cost
per day for
each referral
is **£10.44**

Parent Family Support Advisors – our eyes and ears in school....

Our Champions have been working hard to strengthen the role of the Parent Family Support Adviser (PFSA), which has made a tangible impact on a more joined up way of working.

By providing dedicated spaces, facilitating collaboration, and ensuring ongoing professional support, the initiative has equipped PFSAs to better meet local needs and contribute to lasting positive change. Previously, PFSA's teams only met once a term to catch up as a group. The Champion role facilitates more structured and frequent meetings, offering opportunities for sharing best practices and discussing challenges in a safe and supportive environment. The creation of a supported neutral space has fostered greater collaboration among PFSAs.

The meetings now include structured service updates from providers, including the VCFSE and statutory services. This dedicated time allows PFSAs to remain informed and align their work with broader service provision in the community.

Through integration with the Family Intervention Service the Champion role has enhanced the support available to PFSAs including group supervision, contributing to professional development and improved practice. The group now works together more effectively, sharing insights and strategies to address local needs. The improved sense of connection across the area has strengthened the team's ability to respond to challenges collectively.

Regular service updates ensure that PFSAs are well-informed and able to signpost families to appropriate services effectively. The work has strengthened professional networks, enhancing the sense of community and shared purpose among PFSAs. The consistent focus on collaboration and support has contributed to a shift in working, promoting a more integrated approach to supporting families.



**Luke Jackson, Connect Somerset Champion for Bridgwater
Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership**

HEALTH OUTCOMES

38% INCREASE IN PEOPLE MOVING FROM UNDER 30MINS TO 30-90MINS/WEEK OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

46% INCREASE IN ABILITY (KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE) TO MANAGE OWN HEALTH AND WELLBEING

29% INCREASE IN WELLBEING SCORES (51% INCREASE IN FEELINGS OF USEFULNESS AGAIN)

93% OF PARTICIPANTS ARE DOING STRENGTH AND BALANCE EXERCISES AT THE END OF THE PROGRAMME (INCREASE OF 69%)

“ I've had absolutely nothing else to help me. I was actually waiting for physio for months and months before I even had my fall. I've been waiting for so long to find something like this. This is exactly what I need. It's been invaluable. ”

**SASP, supporting
our older residents
through Move 2
Independence.....**

1st March 2024 – 30 September 2024

“ Thank you for helping me to get outside again – it's really lovely to feel the fresh air ”

100%



RECOGNISE THE BENEFIT OF STRENGTH AND BALANCE FOR FALLS PREVENTION

RATE THE SERVICE AS GOOD OR EXCELLENT (GOOD 46%, EXCELLENT 54%)

RECOMMEND M2I TO OTHERS RECENTLY DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL



“When the sun comes up, I'm getting up. I'm doing everything for myself, independently now. I'm dressing, cooking and eating, showering... I'm doing all that on my own!”

COLIN NO LONGER NEEDS HIS PACKAGE OF CARE

Digital and data transformation at its best!...



Alex highlights how the new joined up digital platform, Transform Family View, helped support a young person in South Somerset.

“We were made aware of a young person with low school attendance. By using the Transform Family View, the school could see that this individual had a complex family life and reduced, missing episodes in recent months. With this information, a Parent and Family Support Advisor (PFSA) was able to visit the young person at home to offer support and help to stabilise life at home. This support ensured that the young person was able to focus on their education – the missing episodes have reduced and school attendance increased.”

Transform Family View displays a single view of a child and their family’s vulnerabilities, involvements, assessments and education information. The platform is highly secure and can only be accessed by DBS-cleared named professionals. It has had a positive impact on the joining up the early help system by providing contact details of professionals involved with the child and their family to other professionals working with them.

Together with Frome Learning Partnership....

There was a decision made by the Head teachers in the Frome area to work with Somerset Council staff to take change of the behaviour fund for the Frome Area. During this process, the Champion was able to support conversations/meetings between Inclusion Services and FLP and also supporting Deanne from Somerset Works with local knowledge in her transition to Frome FLP Lead. It was also decided that in the new way of allocating the funding for student's support, the Champion would be included in the Frome AIM meeting and PEVP Pannel alongside the Heads, to support shared local knowledge and gap analysis but also to be able to offer insight into other local offers that could support the schools, their students and families.

Because of the Champions inclusion in these meetings, there has been the ability to can multiple education conversations that are happening in a number of different areas, for example the Educational Steering group meetings and Frome Town Councils' CYP Working group meetings. This supports the new look FLP to be up to speed on all information around education in Frome when building the new education plans. Also having a Champion invited into the PEVP meetings meant that there could also be community offers put on the table to support those particularly vulnerable students and scaffold them and their families alongside their access to the funded offers. It has also supported positive relationship building between Champions and the schools/Heads locally, with many of them contacting the Champion through the TAS platform for local connections and/or advice on who to link to in statutory services.

"Vulnerabilities for students are often broader than schools' ability to work with, working within a wider community network enables us to offer a more holistic service to families. This often strengthens the resilience of our learners and their wider family. Working with Champions we are able to identify needs, access community resources and to jointly find creative solutions. Champions offer an ability to access community parent and student voice, which helps triangulate what we hear from schools and students." *Head of Inclusion Services*

Melody Hunter-Evans, Connect Somerset Champion for Frome - Frome Town Council



Testimonies.....

The testimonials section of the report showcases firsthand experiences and feedback from educators, health and social care professionals, community partners and Council colleagues who have benefited from Connect Somerset.

The following is a small selection.

Educators.....

"The support with building links with our local community has been invaluable. It has brought together a network of knowledge and skills for us to be part of and work collaboratively with in the future. In addition, these networks have led to our pupils being able to take part in an exciting art project, engaging them and their families in their local area."

Sharon White, Parent Family Support Adviser, Fairmead School

"We have been working alongside our Champion for some time now and the work we have done together has completely changed our ways of working.... We value the Champion's input into our team and her presence at meetings so highly, it has enabled the support offered to young people and families to be offered earlier and ensures that the support is meaningful and impactful."

Jo Bowman, Manager, Frome Learning Partnership

"Our Champion is hugely beneficial to the children, young people and families we serve in helping us to find the right people and organisations to support them, whatever their specific needs and challenges."

Amanda Seager, Headteacher Trinity First School

"It's so beneficial having the Champion here to bring a different perspective to the interventions we can try and the support that is out there for us to access."

Jules Cadmore, Deputy Head, Robert Blake School

"By being part of relevant pupil and family centred discussion meetings, our Champion can see the gaps our usual structures have in meeting ever increasing demands and will seek to find alternative ways to bridge those gaps.....both relating to Early Help and learning need provisions. From Village Agents to Council Rangers and Volunteer registers and charitable groups, these small steps can often have the biggest impact on whether a child can continue in school or even access alternative support."

Emma Wilkes, Headteacher, Oakfield Academy

"The Champion has worked tirelessly in her role as Connect Champion to link education, health and voluntary services in the community. As a PFSA for a Yeovil Multi-Academy Trust, the Champion has positively impacted the effectiveness of my role, through ongoing signposting and communication updates, facilitating regular area PFSA meetings, and arranging network events to foster inter agency relationships. I have increased my awareness of voluntary services through attending neighbourhood meetings and have been able to successfully signpost families to these services."

Sophie Staple, Parent and Family Support Adviser, Primrose Lane Primary School

Health and Social Care Professionals

"Thank you very much for yesterday the team commented on how good it was, and I think you may get a lot more referrals or request for advice ongoing!"

Claire Eacott, Team Manager, Health Nursing

"Access to this (Transform) joined up data system gives me a better insight to the child and their families vulnerabilities and risk.

I can include detail, such as school attendance in my Child Protection Conference reports and quickly make contacts with other professionals involved with the child when I have safeguarding concerns"

Shelley Waller, GP & Des Safeguarding Lead Taunton Road Medical Practice

"It has been wonderful to watch the inspirational work of the Champion. She has an incredible knack of networking, bringing people together, sharing a vision, creating opportunities for connection and collaboration. I, and those I have met with feel included and our input valued and want to stay on the journey forward with her. For me, personally, her professionalism, enthusiasm and knowledge has brought back some hope for further development of supportive neighbourhoods and effective community cohesion."

Claire Wilson, Special Educational Mental Health and Parenting Consultant

"Working with the Connect Somerset Champions is paramount to community working. With Wes Streeting's 3 Asks of 'hospital to community', 'prevention rather than sickness', and 'digital', community is where we need to be leading from. The local Champion is very much influencing and supporting us to make these changes in the community."

Deb Gompertz, Complex Care GP, NHS Somerset

"The connect champion is integral to bringing our neighbourhood network together. Since working with them I have welcomed the opportunity to understand and explore the amazing services supporting and connecting the community. In recognising the wider determinant of health, successful healthcare delivery is dependent upon strong communities and I therefore looking forward to our continued work together."

Hannah Bagatelas, Neighbourhood Development Manager for South Somerset, NHS Somerset

Voluntary, Community, Faith & Social Enterprise partners.....

"Wow! Thanks for a wonderful encouraging response to our meeting today. Great to have your input and support. Together we can make a difference in our beautiful town! Blessings."

**Bob House, Elder
Wellington Churches Together**

"They have certainly lived up to their title role as a Yeovil Connect Somerset Champion. I do not recall ever having someone so dedicated to improving the community through shared projects, joint working and building connections between organisations, making sure all voices are heard. Long may this continue."

**Joella Summers, Joint Programme Lead,
Yeovil4Family**

"The Champion's passion for her community work is inspiring. She demonstrates a real depth of knowledge and passion for the community, and her creative thinking drives her success."

Liz Loud, Partnership Manager (Children & Young People's Mental Health), SPARK Somerset

"Your role as a connector has been invaluable, allowing us to link with organisations more quickly, thanks to your existing relationships. The projects you work on are truly inspiring, giving me the courage to pursue ours with even more determination."

Joanna Bogunska, Community Organiser, SPARK Somerset

"I have been so encouraged and impressed to have the Champion fulfilling the connect role in the town. The role of drawing people and agencies together, leading collaboration, empowering the voice of the community and identifying opportunities and potential requires a particular skill set and so these roles are not easy to fulfil and not easy to recruit into."

"The Champion has been a phenomenal gift to the community. She is always enthusiastic, innovative, generous and creative. She has absolutely made the most of the role she has been entrusted with and we are all the better for it."

Adam Dyer, Leader, Yeovil Community Church and The Gateway

Somerset Council colleagues.....

"Champions are fantastic at linking all sectors together and really strengthening that communication and link between services. I am very much looking forward to working more with the Champion as our roles further develop."

**Catherine Bray, FOREST
Coordinator, Public Health**

"The ability to have access to a wide range of Champions who provide local knowledge is crucial as we move forward with Locality Working . We need to be able to connect to the wide range of opportunities that exist within an area and Connect Champions are ideally placed to provide this . SomersetWorks, SomersetWorks Plus, SomersetWorks Partnership College would have found it more problematic to link young people to opportunities without this resource."

Richard Lucas, Head, Somerset Works

"Great event today, so well organised and informative, looking forward to seeing the slides, I really love everything that is going on and would love to volunteer at the Kings Arms in the future. Would have been great to catch up today, the next time the Champion holds one of these meetings I am going to book the whole morning out."

Michelle Brooks, LCN Link Officer, Somerset Council

"During the past year, I have built a great working relationship with the local Connect Somerset champion. She has been extremely keen to engage with our Education Team to further extend the network of support for children, young people and their families in the local area. She has worked tirelessly to build relationships with local schools, and as a result, school leaders have spoken very highly of her and what she can bring to the table for them. The Champion is passionate about linking cross-sector professionals, for example, the work she has done with the Birchfield community as well as her work in connecting local PFSAs not only to each other but to the opportunities available to them to support their work further."

Marie Palmer, Education Relationship Manager, Somerset Council

"I have over the last six months built a great working relationship with my local Connect Somerset. They have been instrumental in helping bring together professionals, public services along with community groups to help support families, children, and schools within the local area. I am very much looking forward to working more closely with the Champion when we start working within our *Locality Teams* structure."

**Kate Edwards, Education Relationship
Manager, Somerset Council**